

Chichester District Association of Local Councils

Chair: Cllr Andrew Shaxson (Harting & Elsted and Treyford Parish Councils)
Clerk: Anna Beams, Mulberry & Co, 9 Pound Lane, Godalming, GU7 1BX
Tel: 03303 450597
Email: admin@wsalc.co.uk

Minutes of a Meeting of Chichester District Association of Local Councils held on Thursday 29th June 2023 at 7pm via Zoom.

Present:

Cllr Catherine Salamons	Birdham PC
Cllr Henry Potter	Boxgrove Parish Council
Cllr Stephen Johnson	Chidham & Hambrook PC
Cllr Anna Gaymer	Donnington PC
Cllr Charles Britton	East Lavington PC (Vice Chair)
Cllr Anne Tyrrell	Ebernoe PC
Cllr Helen Marshall	Fishbourne PC
Cllr Sheena King	Funtington PC
Cllr Andrew Shaxson	Harting / Elsted and Treyford PCs(Chair)
Cllr Caroline Neville	Lodsworth PC
Cllr Annie Maclean	North Mundham PC
Cllr Jane Price	Plaistow & Ifold PC
Cllr Martin Mellodey	Sidlesham PC
Cllr Amanda Tait	Southbourne PC
Cllr Simon Oakley	Tangmere PC
Cllr Nigel Ricketts	Westbourne PC (<i>joined at 7.29</i>)
Cllr Ivan Western	West Wittering PC
Cllr Sophie Winship	Wisborough Green PC
Cllr Ian Price	
Cllr Catherine Payne	
Trevor Leggo	WSALC, CEO
Anna Beams	Secretary

1. Chair's welcome

The Vice-Chair welcomed members to the meeting and advised that Cllr Alistair Spencer has resigned from the position of Chair. He thanked Cllr Spencer for all he has done for CDALC.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Nicolette Pike (West Wittering PC and CHC representative), Richard Hitchcock (Westbourne PC), Timothy Firmston (Birdham PC), Cllr

Alun Alesbury (Stoughton PC) and representatives from Loxwood and Midhurst Parish Councils.

3. Election of Chair

On a proposal by Cllr Henry Potter, it was **AGREED** by the majority that Cllr Andrew Shaxson be appointed as Chair.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

In the absence of any nominations, Cllr Charles Britton volunteered to stand as Vice-Chair, it was **AGREED** by the majority that Cllr Charles Britton be appointed as Vice-Chair.

5. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st March 2023

The minutes were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

6. To appoint 3x representatives to WSALC as agreed by the WSALC Board at their AGM on 25th November 2022

In the absence of any nominations, Cllr Charles Britton agreed to continue as WSALC representative. Cllrs Amanda Tait and the Chair volunteered to stand, and it was **AGREED** by the majority to appoint all three as representatives.

The three appointed CDALC representatives to the WSALC Board are therefore Cllrs Charles Britton, Amanda Tait and Andrew Shaxson.

7. To appoint Treasurer and 3x signatories

In the absence of any other volunteers, Anna Beams agreed to continue as Treasurer.

The Chair agreed to continue as a signatory. As the remaining signatories are no longer representatives on CDALC, a further two signatories are sought and the matter is deferred to the next meeting.

The Chair advised that the balance is currently £1065.00 with a £500 grant expected to be received from WSALC.

8. Annual Subscription – to set a subscription for 2023-24

It was **AGREED** that no subscription will be levied for the financial year 2023-24 in order to encourage engagement from all councils within the district. The only costs currently being incurred are for administration which can be paid from the current balance held.

9. Further discussions on the proposal to form a CDALC Steering Group

The Chair explained that attendance at CDALC meetings continues to be low. He suggested that a small number of volunteers from various areas within the county form a Steering

Group to meet and establish ways to make CDALC more relevant to all member councils and therefore increase engagement.

The Chair offered to lead the Steering Group and it was suggested that the other members should comprise of one person from each of the coastal strip, SDNP, north of the Downs, Northeast of the Downs and those half in and half out of the SDNP.

Cllr Sophie Winship advised that she will raise the matter with her Council as, although she would like to take part, due to time restraints she may be unable to participate fully herself.

The following volunteered to take part and will therefore form the Steering Group:

The Chair, Cllr Andrew Shaxson (Harting & Elsted and Treyford PCs)

The Vice-Chair, Cllr Charles Britton (East Lavington PC)

Cllr Annie Maclean (North Mundham PC)

Cllr Helen Marshall (Fishbourne PC)

Cllr Anna Gaymer (Donnington PC) – would prefer meetings outside of working hours.

Cllr Stephen Johnson (Chidham & Hambrook PC)

An initial meeting will be arranged to discuss building on the foundations of the association and the creation of an operational structure for CDALC. The Group will report to the next CDALC meeting.

ACTION: arrange an initial Steering Group meeting.

10. Update from Chief Executive of WSALC, Trevor Leggo

- There is evidence of a scarcity of clerks within West Sussex. A Clerk that covers four parishes has resigned; Trevor is assisting three of the parishes with filling their vacancies. Two other councils are struggling to fill vacancies. Councils are seeking experienced, qualified clerks and Trevor is considering a 'Clerks Academy' whereby notices will be placed in suitable places, such as local notice boards, inviting members of communities to attend the Academy and to learn about the role of the Clerk.
- The SDNPA elections have recently taken place, facilitated by WSALC. Cllrs Andrew Shaxson and Alun Alesbury were duly elected as WSALC representatives. From the 87 eligible voting councils, 25 ballot papers were received which was lower than previous elections.
- The behaviour of Councillors continues to be an issue with a great deal of time spent on resolving conflicts, usually between Clerks and Councillors, which can result in the Clerk leaving. Without sanctions, Monitoring Officers can do very little. Recruitment is difficult and locum clerks are expensive and therefore conflict should be avoided.

It was suggested that it is important to re-iterate the complexity of the Clerks role when recruiting and that Councils should be realistic about who is encouraged to apply.

It was also suggested that the focus should be on the training of the Chairmen to alleviate issues involving the treatment of clerks. Trevor reminded members that there is a comprehensive training programme available to all WSALC parishes.

11. SDNP Report

Cllr Andrew Shaxson referred to his report circulated with the agenda ([appendix A](#)). He added that the SDNPA Chair, Vanessa Rowlands, was re-appointed to the SDNPA at the recent elections and that 13 out of the 27 members are new.

There were no further questions.

12. CHC Report

In the absence of the CHC representative, Cllr Nicolette Pike, the report circulated with the agenda was accepted as read. ([appendix B](#)).

13. Matter of concern to your council

Cllr Catherine Salamons, Birdham Parish Council, raised concerns regarding an emerging planning trend whereby Rule 6 participants are not wishing to, or cannot, participate in appeals due to cost implications. Local communities do not understand why the parish council cannot do more to appeal large developments.

Trevor Leggo explained that the reluctance by planning authorities to fight appeals as robustly due to cost implications is a national issue.

Cllr Simon Oakley, Tangmere Parish Council, expressed his concern regarding the ability of parish councils to manage the scale of CIL receipts which will be on a level never seen. He suggested that the parish councils, WSALC and CDALC should scrutinise the changes proposed to CIL in detail and consider the governance challenges that the changes may bring.

Trevor Leggo advised that the WSALC Planning Advisor, Steve Tilbury, recently produced a briefing paper on the proposed changes which was circulated to clerks. He added that it was important that all parish councils have a robust business plan in place to identify where the money will be spent.

Cllr Nigel Ricketts, Westbourne Parish Council, wondered what councils can do to attract more people to stand for election and co-option.

Trevor reminded members that WSALC commissioned a video to be used during this year's election campaigns which may be used for future election and co-option campaigns.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman

DRAFT

Appendix A

SDNP report June 2023

As I write this report, and in common with many local district councils, the membership of the South Downs National Park Authority is in flux. There are 27 members, and at present only 11 are guaranteed to be the same people who represented their organisations before the elections. As Chichester District parishes within the National park will know, they have just had the opportunity to nominate and then vote for parish representatives. Included in this number is the current chair of the Authority, Vanessa Rowlands. The results for East and West Sussex will be announced on 26th June, so on the 29th I might well be presenting this report having not been elected.

Whilst the location of the unfortunate news on the planning front is just in Hampshire it could well affect all National Parks. An Inspector decided to allow the appeal for 60 eco lodges, a farm shop and electric car charging location adjacent to the A 3 (SDNP/21/06431/FUL). Whilst there is a need for such facilities, the National Park argued that it should not use that location, not least because of the detrimental landscape impact. The Inspector fundamentally disagreed. He said that as the area is degraded by the A3 and its junctions that part of the National Park is of lesser quality; it does not contribute in any meaningful way to the landscape of the SDNP. The National policy gives equal protection to all land in the National Park. We are not only upset about this ruling, but concerned that an appeal having driven a planning horse and cart through an important national policy, other sites in other parks – and AONBs - could well be vulnerable.

The controversial topic for many people has been the outcome of the fire at the Angel in Midhurst on night of 15th / 16th March. There has been a great deal of local anger about the way the way the outcome has been handled. The SDNPA, WSCC and CDC have been hamstrung by legislation that protects listed buildings, and it is only because they over-rode the inaction of the owner and their insurers that the work was put in hand by those authorities using public money which they hope to recoup from the insurers. The road will open this Friday 23rd June, 10 days ahead of schedule. Is there a lesson to be learnt; should relevant legislation be scrutinised and amended? Should the preservation of a Victorian façade in front of a burnt-out 400 year old building outweigh the impact of the road-closure on dozens of businesses, the inconvenience to many thousands of local people, and tens of thousands of motorists?

I referred to the Glover report a year ago, and the fact that there was no movement on the recommendations. That remains the case; arguably the government has many more pressing matters to consider. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that so much constructive work has been shelved. Whilst there isn't much movement on the required revision of the SDNPA's Local Plan, those Parish Councils who do not have a Neighbourhood Development Plan are being encouraged to create Parish Priority Statements. Regardless of the outcome, and noting that they will not have any planning policy weight, the process will make Parish Councils look to the future, to effectively forward plan. Many already do to some extent,

but with our limited resources much of our time is spent on fire-fighting 'events', as they occur.

Many other long-term issues remain, not least the Water Neutrality issue that also affects areas north-east of Chichester District. Many ways are being found to 'officially' reduce water usage, but in the long run will it solve the issues of too much water use and too little of it available in this area? And don't mention sewage.....

Andrew Shaxson

Appendix B

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY REPORT OF CDALC REPRESENTATIVE

JUNE 2023

There was an Advisory Committee meeting held on 17th April which was the last for Richard Craven and the first for the new CEO Matt Briers. The new Harbour Master Jo Cox was not due to start her new job until May so did not attend.

The first item was a remote presentation by Dr Clare Mellett concerning the preliminary results of a study to find a sustainable solution for Fishbourne including the option of introducing a new salt marsh. This can be done with EA grant and managed by CHC. All options are now being considered and public consultation will take place in due course.

Appledrum wastewater plant is vulnerable to flooding and so it is important to produce a sustainable solution to protect it. This could include bunding as additional sea protection.

A trial of dumping sediment in Itchenor harbour to create salt marsh is underway, it is proving more expensive than at first estimated. The shortfall has been paid for by a local charity East Head Impact.

Itchenor jetty is creating objections on social media. It needs to be stressed that the gate is only closed at peak times.

Itchenor jetty marine licence has been submitted with a 12 week period for consideration.

DEFRA has announced a further £44m for national parks. It is not yet known how this will be allocated.

CHC is still pushing to become a statutory consultee for the Government. Gillian Keegan MP has been down for a meeting and has now written to Michael Gove.

The CHC Management Plan is being reviewed and a new draft will be ready by November.

There was a very interesting presentation by Sarah Chatfield on Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature "CHaproN" annual review. The green funding for CHaproN so far has totalled £968,000

There is good news on the reduction of macroalgae weed in the harbour caused by excessive nitrates. This has been caused by educating farmers and water companies. This reduction has led to the increase in new seagrass and seahorses. The EA are getting more resources to deal with farmers who are seen to be the largest polluters in the harbour. This situation was made worse by the drought.

It was agreed that Keith Martin, CDALC representative for the past 10 years would be awarded the Freedom of the Harbour.

The chairman held a reception at Hayling Island Sailing club as a farewell to Richard Craven to which we were all asked to contribute to a leaving gift for him. This was very well attended and he will be much missed

The Planning Committee sits monthly, I have been asked to take over the chair in July. It has been of much concern that the areas bordering the AONB are under constant development pressure. At present there are several sites with significant numbers of houses under appeal. In particular there has been much concern about trying to ensure that the AONB and its setting are given due weight by the Inspectors. This is not always of concern to the officers at CDC, but is an issue in the NPPF.

It has been difficult for CHC to decide whether to apply for Rule 6 status at these Planning Inquiries which enables a third party to be represented by a barrister. The decision is far from straightforward, especially with two sites at appeal for non-determination. CHC takes its duty to the AONB very seriously, but also has to consider using its funds prudently, so it is essential to be able to ascertain that if large sums of money are spent that there will be some real added value, which will be of weight in the appeal context.

Nicolette Pike

West Wittering Parish Council

